

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nitta (US 5,445,692). Claims 3 and 6-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nitta in view of Yamashita (JP 11126856). Claims 9, 12, 15, 17-21, 23 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nitta in view of Yamashita and further in view of Wood (US 6,429,506).

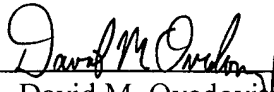
Claims 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 22 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended so as to include the features of claim 4 and claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Further, claim 18 has also been amended so as to include the features of claim 4. Claims 10 and 11 have been amended into independent form by including the features of claim 9 therein and claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Further, claims 12 and 21 have been amended so as to be dependent from claim 10 and new claims 25 and 26 have been added which correspond to claims 12 and 21, respectively, and are dependent from claim 11. Claim 15 has been amended so as to include the features of claim 16 and claim 16 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. As a result, it is apparent that claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-15 and 17-26 are allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there are issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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